

Tick-borne and Mosquito-borne Disease Prevention Procedures and Activities for Schools

Guidelines for school committees, administrators, teachers, and school nurses

The Vermont Department of Health (VDH) recommends that schools develop guidelines related to tick-borne and mosquito-borne disease prevention. These guidelines should detail procedures and awareness activities that can be used by staff to promote prevention of tick-borne and mosquito-borne disease.

Procedures to consider:

1. Outline specific steps for school personnel to take when a student presents with a tick attached to him/her.
2. As part of the standard permission slip (waiver) for field trips involving outdoor activities, include information alerting the parents that students will be visiting areas where ticks and/or mosquitoes could be found. Information on preventing tick and mosquito bites could also be provided. (*Fact sheets on Insect Repellents, tickborne diseases and mosquito-borne diseases are available on the VDH website at www.healthvermont.gov*)
3. Outline steps that will reduce the risk of exposure to ticks when students are outside the school building (for all outdoor school-sponsored activities).

Awareness Activities to Consider:

1. Conduct an informational presentation (assembly) to students and staff in the fall and/or spring to promote awareness of tick-borne and mosquito-borne diseases and strategies for prevention. This should ideally be given by the school nurse or other health professional. (*A Lyme disease curriculum for elementary schools (grades 3-5), with student activities and a PowerPoint presentation, is available on the VDH website at <http://www.healthvermont.gov>*).
2. Conduct a training at the beginning of the school year for staff, including teachers, school nurses and employees who work outdoors. In addition to information regarding tick-borne and mosquito-borne diseases, the training should include guidance on how to address students and staff who present with attached ticks, including procedures on tick removal and parental notification.
3. Provide parents with basic information on tick-borne diseases (e.g., Lyme disease, babesiosis, anaplasmosis) and mosquito-borne diseases (e.g., West Nile virus, eastern equine encephalitis) along with information on preventing tick bites and mosquito bites. This information could be included as part of an orientation packet and provided to students and parents at the beginning of the school year. (*Disease-specific facts sheets are available on the VDH website at www.healthvermont.gov*)

Recommended websites for further information:

Vermont Department of Health: www.healthvermont.gov
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov
American Lyme Disease Foundation: www.aldf.com